

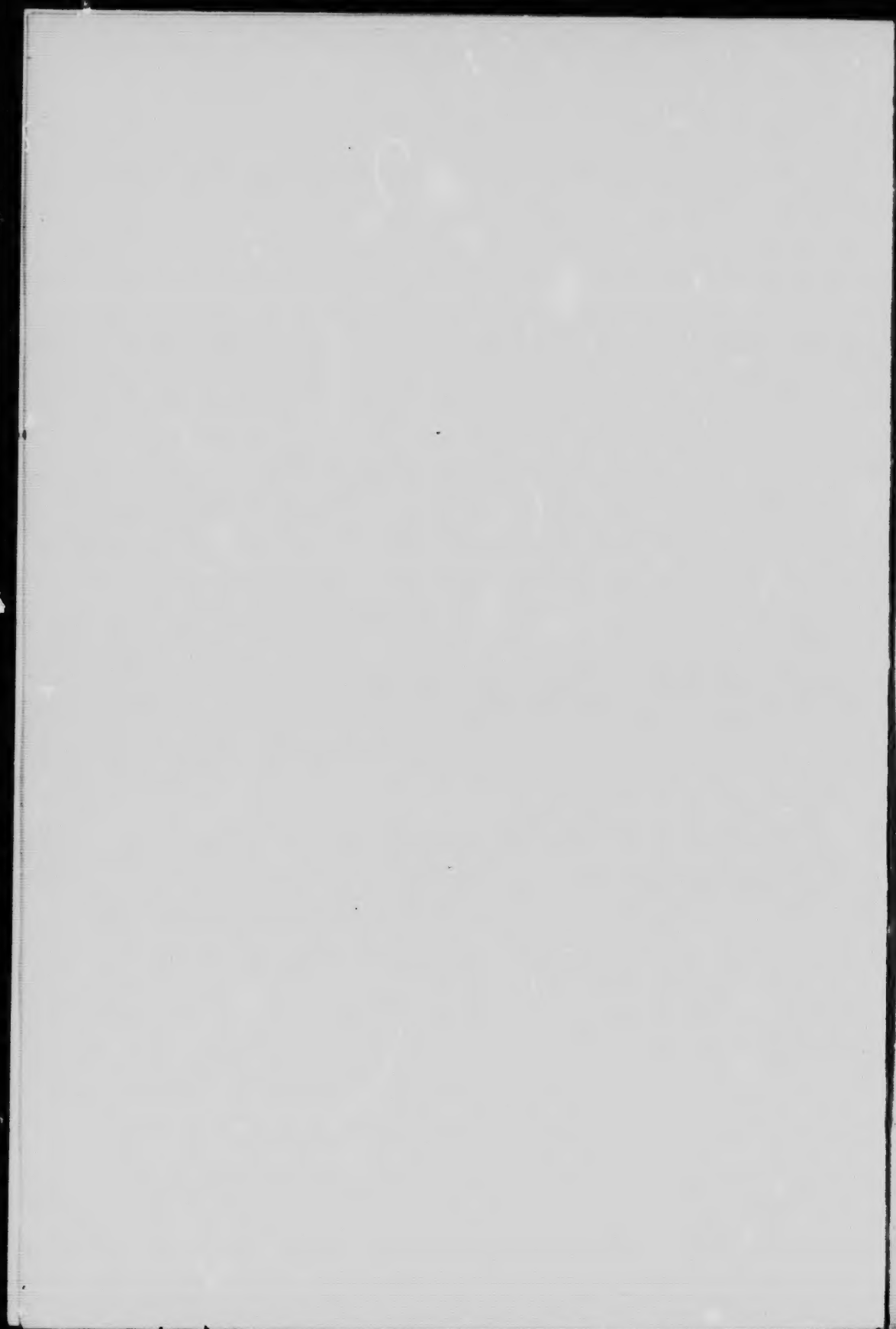
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IMPERIAL DEFENCE.

Canada's Duty.

Paper read by Lieut.-Col. George T. Denison, President of the British Empire League in Canada, at a Meeting of the Toronto Branch, held on February 28, 1901.

Reprinted from the Toronto Globe of March 2, 1901.

The address delivered by Lieut.-Col. G. T. Denison upon "Imperial Defence" at the meeting of the British Empire League has attracted a great deal of attention. The writer presents his case in a remarkably clear and convincing manner, and the paper will certainly evoke much discussion. The paper in full is given :—

I have been asked to write a short paper on Imperial defence in reference to Canada. The first point that naturally arises is whether it is necessary that we should have our defences in proper order or not—whether the cost would not be too great in view of the improbability of war. The most careless reader of history must know that there always have been wars, and always will be, and that want of preparation is more likely to bring on war than the highest efficiency and organization.

Never before in the world's history were there such tremendous armaments and such extraordinary preparations for defence in all civilized countries as at the present time. But in

all Christendom there is no country that is so unprepared to meet danger as the colonies of England, and particularly our own Dominion. This has been caused simply from the fact that we have grown up under the protecting arm of the mother country, which for many years has been and still is the paramount power upon the sea. We have never understood or appreciated the fact that, thanks to the enormous sums paid by the British taxpayer in providing for Imperial defence, we have been living in a security and under conditions of peace which otherwise we most likely would not have enjoyed.

Imperial Troops Defended Frontier.

Many of us can remember—I for one well remember—when in 1866 we had large bodies of Imperial troops side by side with us defending our frontiers. At that time we were not as populous, as wealthy or as prosperous as we are now, and the time has come when we must seriously consider our position, and face the fact, the undoubted fact, that Canada must soon undertake some of the burdens which necessarily accompany national greatness and prosperity.

Canada has a population of about 5,500,000, or perhaps 6,000,000, much more than the population of either Scotland or Ireland. The expenditure on the Imperial army and navy for the year 1898-99, in time of peace, amounted to £44,068,341, or about \$5.40 per head per annum for every soul in the British Isles. At that rate of expenditure, if Canada were an independent country, spending money to preserve her nationality and freedom, she would have to expend on defence about \$21,700,000 per annum.

The United States are paying for the same service now about \$433,000,000, or about \$5.50 per head per annum. This would be equal to about \$30,000,000 for us if we were a part of that republic.

Our Expenditure.

Our militia expenditure in 1899 was \$2,212,000, or about 40 cents per head per annum, while the cost for defence in all civilized countries varies from \$2 to \$5 per head or more. Then let us make another comparison. The total expenditure of the United Kingdom for the year 1898-99 amounted to £108,150,235, of which £44,068,000 were expended upon the army and navy. The same year the expenditure of the Dominion was \$41,903,500. If we had spent on defence in the same proportion to our revenue as our fellow-subjects in the mother country have done, we should have spent about \$16,000,000, instead of \$2,212,000.

The United States in 1899 expended a total of \$605,106,746. The amount expended on their army, navy, military pensions, etc., for that year amounted to over \$433,000,000, or more than two-thirds of the entire expenditure. Were we to expend in the same proportion from our revenue we should spend about \$28,000,000 per annum.

Take another comparison. The export trade of the United Kingdom amounted in value in 1899 to £329,000,000. Our export trade in 1899 amounted to \$158,896,905, just about one-tenth that of the United Kingdom. If we paid for the defence of our export trade in the same proportion as Great Britain, we should have to pay about \$21,000,000 per annum. The same comparison with the United States would show that our outlay would be still greater.

I have shown that in proportion to our population, our annual expenditure and our export trade we are spending about one-tenth of what other nations expend on defence. Now, can we in the colonies, with our great increase in wealth, population, resources and trade, fairly expect to be of all countries the only ones to escape paying

what is reasonable for preserving national life and freedom?

There can be no question that we should begin to consider most seriously our duty in this respect. The mother country is overwhelmed with burdens; every nation in the world is increasing year by year its power, offensive and defensive, and there is no community with assets so valuable, so worth defending and protecting and so liable to excite cupidity as the British Empire. No one can tell at what moment we may all be engaged in a struggle for our very existence as a people, and we should at once organize and combine our strength, so as to be able to make the most effective defence of our rights.

The Duty of Canada.

I have been asked to discuss the question of what we in Canada should do, and I shall make a few suggestions in a few words. In the first place we should increase our militia considerably. We have been spending on the force sums varying from about \$1,200,000 per annum to \$2,212,000 in 1899. A great portion of this money has been paid out for what might be called head-gear—that is, for staff, caretakers, storekeepers and officials of every kind. The machinery for looking after and managing the force is large enough to do the duty for double the number of militia we maintain. I believe an addition of 30 or 35 per cent. to the militia estimates to be spent in drill pay and clothing would cover the cost of doubling the strength of the active militia. It is poor economy not to have this done. A small percentage more would double the number of days' drill which should be devoted to careful instruction in rifle practice.

Defend Our Seaports.

Canada should also take upon her own shoulders the defence and maintenance of Halifax, Esquimaux and Quebec on a proper scale. St. John should be fortified, also Sydney, where our great iron interests are being inaugurated. Sydney should be strongly guarded as a most important coaling station. All this should be done thoroughly. We should maintain a mixed force of cavalry, artillery, infantry, engineers, army service corps, army medical corps, etc., all complete, and enrolled under conditions by which they could be promptly despatched wherever the common interests of our empire required their services, and be retained while the necessity lasted.

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ly maintained in proper quantities, and factories for their manufacture would add greatly to our national strength.

Our Marine Trade.

Canada is one of the great maritime countries of the world. Her mercantile marine is high up in the scale of nations, while her foreign trade is very large and growing with great rapidity and with every prospect of constant increase. She is dependent for the defence of this great outside trade upon the British navy to which she has not yet contributed a farthing. This work is done for her by the people of the United Kingdom, who pay about \$2.75 per head per annum for the navy which defends all the trade of the empire. The mercantile tonnage of the British Empire, according to our last year book, shows that the tonnage of the United Kingdom is 9,001,860, of Canada 679,352, of the Australasian colonies 500,000, in all 10,181,212 tons. The cost of the British navy which defends this shipping is estimated net for this year at £28,791,900. If we paid our proportion as calculated on the tonnage our share would be about \$9,500,000 per annum for naval defence, and yet we pay nothing.

We have some 70,000 sailors and seafaring men engaged in our mercantile marine and as fishermen, and the mother country is in great need of more men to man the fleets that guard our mercantile interests. We should, therefore, try and do our share by training and paying the retaining fee for a reserve of 5,000 sailors at least, as a trained and efficient reserve to aid the mother country to defend the common in any great emergency.

Improve Army Service.

uer to maintain our defensive forces in proper condition there should be such inducements as would attract good officers and encourage them to devote their energies to their profession. The commanding officers of districts, being actually Brigadier-Generals commanding brigades, and in some cases even divisions, should have the rank, title and pay of Brigadier-Generals; their staff officers should have their proper titles and allowances; the Major-General commanding should have higher pay than he gets, and the position should be open to Canadian officers. A pension fund should be established, so that when men got too old for their work they could be retired on an allowance, and then under

such a system the country would be more likely to secure a class of men who now avoid entering a force where there is no career and no prizes.

We must soon face all these expenses and burdens; we must soon begin building warships in Sydney or other sea-ports, and all these schemes I have outlined will cost large sums. But we must do this or else give up defence altogether, and then where would we be? We cannot expect the overburdened English taxpayer to go on defending us forever, if we refuse to do our share, or even a portion of our share, for the common defence, and the logical outcome could only be independence, and if independent we could only preserve that independence by very much heavier outlay. And if we lost our independence and became absorbed in the United States, our proportion of taxes for the military and naval expenses in proportion to our population would be \$30,000,000 per annum, which is many times as large a sum as would amply cover the expenditure that I have been outlining.

Import Duty Suggested.

I advocated in England last summer before the Council of the British Empire League that there should be a duty placed on all foreign imports in every port of the empire to provide a common defence fund. This would produce a large sum if fixed at, say, 5 per cent. or even more, and would give a preferential advantage to every part of the empire in every other part of it. Five per cent. advantage over the foreigner in the English markets would be worth far more to us than any extra expenditure we should have to make for defence. It would encourage immigration, help to make our country prosperous, to keep our people at home and would stimulate the development of all our resources. Our imports from all foreign countries in 1899 amounted to \$122,838,000. A special duty of 5 per cent. on that amount would produce about \$6,100,000, which should very rapidly put our defences in a very much better position, and would be nothing in comparison to the trade advantages we would get, and the common bond of interest it would be to hold all parts of the empire together. It is a very grave question whether it would not pay us to consent to a much higher percentage if the rest of the empire would agree to it. The foreign importations of Great Britain for 1899 amounted to £378,206,000; 5 per cent. duty on that sum would only produce £18,900,000 towards her expenditure of £44,068,000 on defence in 1898-9.

Must Make Sacrifices.

What I wish particularly to impress upon Canadians is this: that we cannot expect to be a free people unless we are willing to make the sacrifices that all nations must make if they desire to preserve their national existence. Men are still alive who can remember the close of a war in which

the United Kingdom, in addition to enormous yearly expenditures, had increased the national debt to the enormous sum of £900,436,000, and this expenditure was faced by a population estimated in 1801 at 10,345,046. It is well for us in Canada to open our eyes and form some idea of what national safety costs and what it has cost our people in the past.

